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ABSTRACT

This booklet contains some examples of the assessment items used in the fifth English language survey of the Assessment of Achievement Programme (AAP). The examples in the booklet are intended to provide teachers with a clear idea of the range of items used in the survey in the hope that they will provide material for personal professional development and for discussion in inservice training sessions in schools and other locations. The examples provided in the booklet should be seen in the context of the survey as a whole. The booklet is divided into two parts, reflecting the structure of the survey. The first part of the booklet provides two examples of reading assessment used in the survey: one information text and associated tasks used at P4, and one narrative text and associated tasks used at P7 and S2. These examples are preceded by a brief description of the different types of assessment used in assessing reading. The second part provides examples of writing assessment used in the survey along with sample responses. (NKA)

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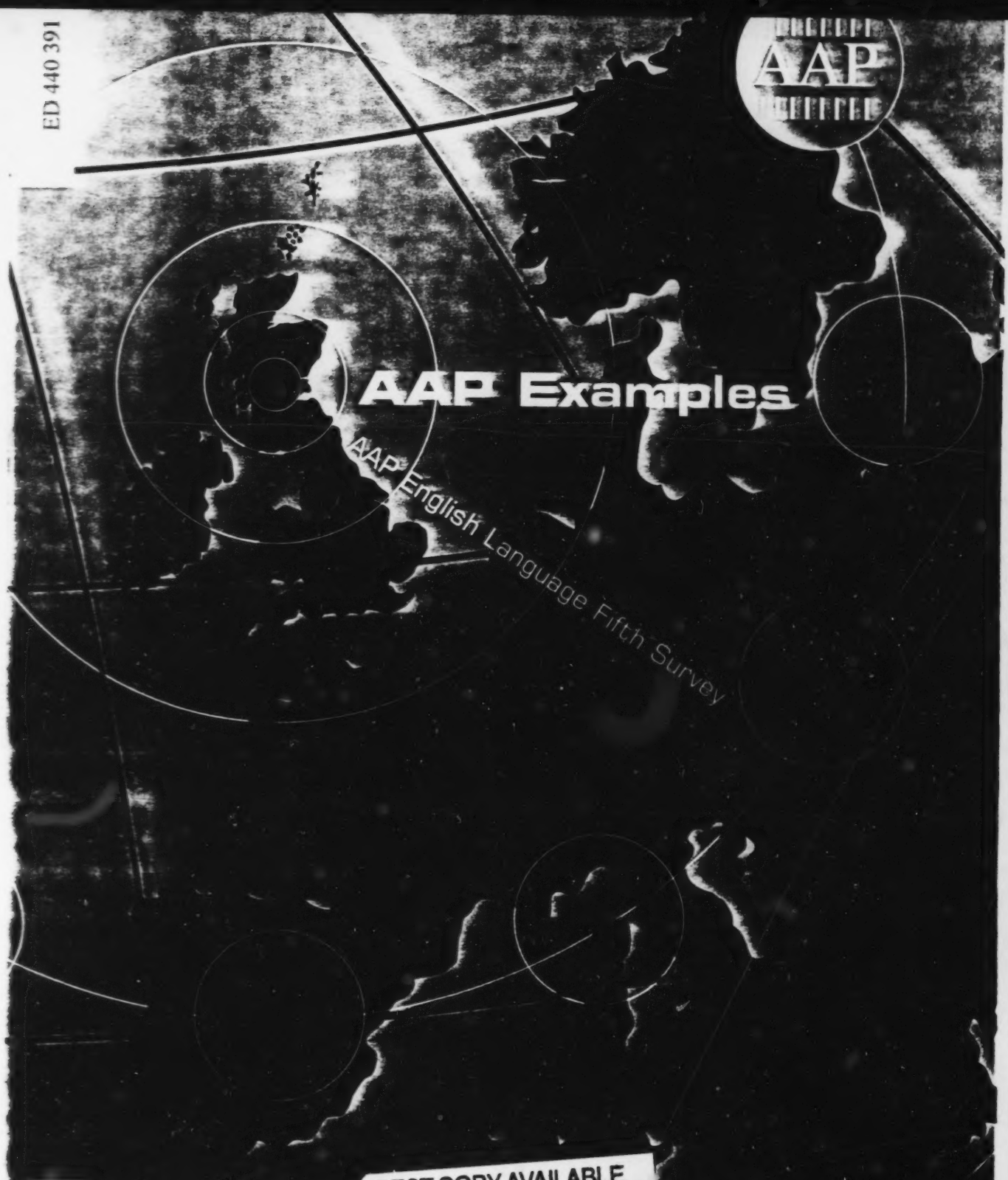

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2

SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

Making it work together

Contents

	Page
What is the Assessment of Achievement Programme	2
Introduction	3
Part A - Reading Examples	4
P4	5
P7/S2	8
Part B - Writing Examples	11
Some Examples for Discussion	16

What is the Assessment of Achievement Programme?

The Assessment of Achievement Programme (AAP) was established by the Scottish Office Education Department (SOED) in 1981 to monitor the performance of pupils in particular areas of the curriculum. Since 1983 there have been regular surveys in three core curriculum areas:

- English language
- mathematics
- science.

The main objectives of the AAP are to:

- assess what pupils in P4, P7 and S2 know and can do
- provide information on performance in relation to levels defined in the *5–14 National Guidelines*
- provide evidence about changes in performance over time
- measure differences in the performances of boys and girls.

The surveys are intended to inform the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED), education authorities, teachers and other interested parties about the achievement of pupils and to indicate ways of improving teaching and learning.

The Information Pack

This booklet of examples is part of an Information Pack on the results of the Fifth English language survey. The pack also includes a summary of the main findings of the survey and *Feedback*, which highlights points from the survey's findings directly relevant to classroom practice.

Copies of the pack have been distributed to all primary and secondary schools in Scotland. Additional copies are available from the Dissemination Officer, SEED Research Unit, Area 2B, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ (0131-244-0167).

Introduction

This booklet contains some examples of the assessment items used in the Fifth English language survey. They are reproduced here to provide teachers with a clear idea of the range of items used in the survey. It is hoped that they will provide material for personal professional development and for discussion in in-service training sessions in schools and other locations.

The examples provided should be seen in the context of the survey as a whole. The structure of the survey and the way assessment items were used is described in *Findings* which is part of the Information Pack.

This booklet is divided into two parts, reflecting the structure of the survey.

The first part provides two examples of **reading** assessment used in the survey – one information text and associated tasks used at P4 and one narrative text and associated tasks used at P7 and S2. These examples are preceded by a brief description of the different types of assessment used in assessing reading. The second part provides examples of **writing** assessment used in the survey along with sample responses. (Note: the layout of some of the items in this publication differs from the layout in the test materials.)

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Part A
Reading Examples

1. Item types used to assess reading

The following notes provide a brief description of the types of items used to assess reading in the survey. Most of these item types can be found in the examples which follow.

Sequencing
Sentences summarising the main events of the story were to be numbered sequentially. This item type was used at P4 only.

Multiple choice
A variety of multiple choice techniques was used. The advantage of this type of item is that the ability of the pupils to write does not impinge upon the assessment of reading and was therefore particularly useful at P4.

True, False, Can't Tell
The Can't Tell option removes some of the guesswork from the item type as well as requiring a more accurate reading of the text.

Table completion/information transfer
Pupils were asked to complete a table using information from a text.

Examples from the text
The pupils were asked to find, for example, synonyms, similes, metaphors, onomatopoeic words, or descriptive phrases.

Sentence completion
Pupils were asked to complete, in a few words, a series of summary statements about facts or feelings from the text.

Prediction
Pupils were asked to match thoughts or feelings with characters or situations in the text.

Open questions
This item type required close reading of the text for information or ideas and a correct answer was not necessarily a direct quote from the text. This type of question tended to be aimed at the more skilled reader who answered by summarising the main ideas correctly.

Summary completion
A well written summary completion is a reliable means of assessing pupils' overall understanding of a text. A summary of part or all of the text must be written to reflect the purpose for which the text was being read. Some of the principal meaning-bearing words are deleted and pupils are required to replace them. The intention is that only someone who has read and understood the original text will know what to put into the gaps. (Fundamentally different from the cloze technique). The gaps must be filled with any word or phrase which recreates the meaning of the original text. It may be pupils' own words or words from the text. Plausible answers that make a different sense of the original are not acceptable. In marking, spelling is ignored. A good summary should be based on a well written text and be itself carefully constructed.

2. P4 example

THUNDER and LIGHTNING[1]

Amazing but true !
There are about 15 million thunderstorms a year around the world. About 2,000 storms rage at any moment day or night.

Thunderstorms
When it has been very hot in the summer, we sometimes have noisy thunderstorms with flashes of lightning. You can often tell when thunder is coming. The clouds build up, you may feel sticky, or even get a headache.

Electricity in a cloud becomes so powerful that it jumps to another cloud or to the ground as a flash of lightning. A burst of heat from the flash makes the air nearby explode and produces a clap of thunder. Often you see the lightning first and have to wait for the noise of the thunder. In fact they happen at the same time. We see the lightning first because light travels much more quickly than sound.

Danger
When the lightning strikes the ground, it is very dangerous to be anywhere nearby. The flash comes from the clouds to the nearest point it can reach - usually a high building or a tree. Even if it is raining very heavily, you should never stand under a tree to shelter from a thunderstorm. The lightning may hit that tree.

Amazing but true !
The only person to survive being struck by lightning seven times was an American, Roy Sullivan. He lost his big toenail in 1942, his eyebrows in 1969 and had his hair set on fire twice. The other times he just had slight burns.

How far away?
You can tell if a storm is getting closer. Count the seconds between the flashes of lightning and the crashes of thunder. If you count less each time, the storm is coming nearer. If you count more each time, the storm is going away.

[1]Adapted from © *Weather Facts*, 1992, Usborne Publishing Ltd

THUNDER and LIGHTNING .

Look back at the passage as often as you like to help you answers these questions.

Section A
Look at these sentences about the passage. Choose the correct answer to finish each sentence. **Underline your answer.**

1. Lightning is
   - a big noise.
   - a flash of electricity.
   - a big storm.

2. Thunder is
   - a loud noise.
   - a heavy storm.
   - a flash of electricity.

Section B
Read the **Amazing but true** boxes. These sentences below tell you the same facts but some of the words are missing. **Fill in the gaps, using one word or two words in each space.** You may use words from the passage or your own words.

At this moment there are _____ (1) storms going on.

Fifteen million _____ (2) happen all over the world every _____ (3).

An American has survived _____ (4) strikes of lightning. Once he lost his _____ (5) and another time his _____ (6).

Section C
Look at these sentences about **Thunderstorms**. Decide whether each sentence is true or false or whether you can't tell because the story doesn't say. **Tick ONE box (True or False or Can't Tell) beside each sentence.**

	True	False	Can't Tell
1. Sometimes sticky weather comes before lightning.			
2. Thunderstorms are always short.			
3. Lightning starts in the clouds.			
4. Lightning only jumps to the ground.			
5. Lightning is electricity.			
6. Thunderstorms bring cooler rain.			
7. Thunder is the noise of exploding air.			
8. Lightning and thunder happen separately.			
9. Sound travels more slowly than light.		✓	
10. There are more thunderstorms in Scotland than England.			

Section D

These sentences are about the dangers of lightning, but some of the words are missing. **Fill in the gaps, using one word or two words in each space.** You may use words from the passage or your own words.

Lightning some times strikes _____ (7) or _____ (8).

Being out in a storm can be _____ (9). Don't shelter near a

_____ (10) in case it is _____ (11) by lightning.

Section E

These sentences are about how far away a storm is. Choose the answer you think is correct. **Underline your answer**.

1. You can | work out / see / imagine | whether a storm is coming nearer

by counting the seconds | before the lightning. / after the thunder. / after the lightning. |

2. The | more / less / faster | you count, the farther away the storm is.

3. The passage is part of | a book about weather. / an adventure book about a storm. / safety rules for bad weather. / a health and safety book. |

9

P7/S2 Example

SHONA[2]

In MacKay's store you could buy everything from a pound of tea or a pin, to a litre of paraffin. The goods for sale were piled unceremoniously on bare, unpainted wooden shelves supported by metal frames in tiers of four that rose from floor to ceiling. Very little light came through the tiny windows and the naked fluorescent tubes, high up under the roof, burned even during the brightest day.

When Shona walked in Mr MacKay was deep in conversation with Mrs MacBratney, the tall, thin wife of the island's garage mechanic.
'Hello, Shona,' he called out. 'I'll see to you in just a minute, when I've finished with Mrs MacBratney. Why don't you have a look round my dear?'

Shona, like all the locals, did not need to 'look round'. She knew from habit where everything lived. The store's huge stock of such a diverse range of goods might have seemed odd to tourists but it proved an enormous comfort to the locals when the island was cut off for weeks at a time during the winter gales.
The main reason for Mr MacKay's invitation to wander round the store was so that he could continue his gossip with Mrs MacBratney and the first words Shona overheard made certain that her ears remained well tuned to the conversation.

'The Laird said that he wants to put up a new building,' said Mr MacKay.
Mrs MacBratney was clearly shocked. "But you've only had this place these last twenty years.'
'Aye, well, he thinks I need refrigerated display cabinets, like they have on the mainland and that I should have a big, huge window all down that side.'
'Whatever for?'
'So that people can see it's a shop, he said.'
'But everybody knows it's a shop. It's the only one on the island.'
Mr MacKay nodded. 'He thinks it ought to look like one though. Which is why he wants to put in this fine big window.'
'And the first winter gale will take it straight out again!' Mrs MacBratney said scornfully.
Mr MacKay nodded in agreement. 'And the cost! He's no doubt trying to find a way of putting up my rent, that's all. I suspect he'll have second thoughts when he realises that everything has to come from the mainland and costs three times as much by the time it lands here. And when Fergus called with the mails this morning he tells me the Laird's been talking about building a great factory for processing fish and seaweed over on the west side of the island.'
'But the boats would never get in there, it's far too shallow!'
'Fergus says the Laird intends dredging it. But then, I says, how's he going to get the stuff out to the ferry with nothing but a sandy track, fit only for a horse and cart, between the west side and the quay?'
'Ah,' it was Mrs MacBratney's turn to sound knowing, 'have you not heard about all the new, good, wide roads he's going to build? He mentioned to my husband when he called to buy petrol.'
'We've heard it all before! These people come up here with their grand plans to change the world but they lose interest quickly enough in my experience.' Mr MacKay shook his head.

Shona hoped they would lose interest. She wanted her island to stay the way it was. Nothing she had heard so far sounded like a change for the better.

[2] © *The Flawed Glass* by Ian Strachan, Heinemann New Windmills, 1991. Reproduced by kind permission of Caroline Sheldon Literary Agency

SHONA

Look back at the story as often as you like to help you answer these questions.

Section A
The Laird wanted to make some changes on the island. **What were the main changes?**

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

Section B
Look at these sentences about the story. Decide whether each sentence is true or false or whether you can't tell from the story.
Tick ONE box (True, False, or Can't Tell) beside each sentence.

	True	False	Can't Tell
1. Shona was going to buy some bread.			
2. There were two shops on the island.			
3. Things were more expensive on the island.			
4. Mr. Mackay had been the shopkeeper for twenty years.			
5. The sea was deep on the west side.			
6. There was a good road from the west side to the pier.			
7. The shop had four windows.			
8. There are some cars on the island.			
9. Shona was talking to Mr. Mackay.			
10. The island had beautiful beaches.			
11. It could be difficult to reach the island in winter.			

Section C
The author uses carefully chosen phrases. **Find the phrase used to describe the following**:

a. talking together intently _____

b. listening carefully _____

c. spoke knowledgeably _____

Section D

Here is a short summary about the conversation in the shop. Some of the words have been missed out. **Fill in the gaps, using one word or two words in each space**. You may use words from the passage or your own words.

The shop's new window would change its _____ (1) and make it look more _____ (2). The locals thought this would be expensive and easily _____ (3) by the winter _____ (4). Mr. Mackay thought the _____ (5) would increase. _____ (6) had told Fergus he wanted a factory for _____ (7) on the west side, with new roads to _____ (8) the products to the _____ (9). None of these _____ (10) were new and Shona hoped the _____ (11) would not be _____ (12).

Section E

There are many suggestions in the story of the island being a small close knit community, in some ways isolated from the mainland. **Find three examples**. You may use your own words.

a.

b.

c.

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Part B
Writing Examples

Here are some examples of writing marked by members of a team of teachers specially recruited for the survey. Levels were awarded for each of four headings: choice and use of language, spelling, selection and organisation of ideas, and punctuation. The levels awarded are shown, but the stage (P4, P7 and S2) is not given. Remember, however, that the marking of writing always contains some element of individual interpretation of the criteria.

The examples have been typed rather than reproduced from the originals. However there has been no editing of what the pupils wrote; spelling and format e.g. paragraphing are as they appeared in the original.

There is also a range of examples without levels which may be used for general discussions.

Example 1: Functional

Pupils wrote a report about their school.

School Report

I think my school is well cuntradd with all the techers and I am very glad we have an inmatament clup. I allso like the glass roof and the long coridahs I like my class room very much I like the way its go five tables all spaced out. I like doing handriting and langege.

Levels - Language: A, Spelling: A, Ideas: A, Punctuation: A

Example 2: Personal

Pupils wrote a personal account about what bravery meant to them.

Bravery

My Best friend saved a cats live in was stock on a pipe next to deep flowing river with strong current he walked aloung the pipe the pipe was quiet long ad he put it the top of his school bag we ran upto to vets and he saved it and the next day I saved a cat up the country

Levels - Language: A, Spelling: A, Ideas: A, Punctuation: below A

Example 3: Functional

Pupils wrote a newspaper report of an incident at sea using notes from various sources.

Coastal Herald
RESCUE AT SEA

On Friday after school 2 children and there cat (Nebu) went to the beach. They were play on a littl raft. Thye wer floting out to sea. A tourist remembered seeing 2 children playing with a crate at the water's edge.
It was geting late their mums and Dads wer geting wored. Thay phoned the police and the police phoned the coastguard the coastgaurd set up an resqu teme and thye found them. thau wer cold and wet but was gld to get home.

Levels - Language: B, Spelling: B, Ideas: B, Punctuation: B

Example 4: Personal

Pupils wrote a personal account of their favourite place.

My favourite place

My favourite place is in the town. I like to look at the sport shop like JJB and Sports Division. I always go to the sport shop JJB that is may favourite shop. I sometimes go to get my stasionary like pencils and rubbers for school. I just love the smell of some of the shops at the town. When I am at the town I get grate feeling. I like to go into the town on my birthday with the money I am given. I always go to McDonalds after a long day at the town. I just love to take the train home.

Levels - Language: B, Spelling: B, Ideas: B, Punctuation: B

Example 5: Functional

Pupils wrote a letter of invitation to an adult not known to them personally.

Mr Irvine's Invitation

Address supplied

Dear Mr Irvine,
I am (name) from (school) in (town).
I am writing to ask if you could possibly be able to come to our school to talk to primary seven about your journeys around Scotland because our topic is called Discover Scotland. We have used most of your books for our topic but it would be more intresting if we could hear you talking live to us. We would be delighted if you could come to talkie to us possibly Thursday 11th June around eleven o'clock am. If this date or time does not sute you please contact us to change the date or time.
We would appreciate it very much if you could come to our school to primary seven.

Yours
sincerely,

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Levels - Language: C, Spelling: C, Ideas: C, Punctuation: C

Example 6: Imaginative

Having read an extract about a boy and his dog, pupils wrote a story involving the same characters.

The Great Adventure

It all began when Ben and Gully went to the park for a picnic. When they were passing the Butchers, they decided to go to the woods instead of the park. So later when they arrived at the woods they climbed over the fence. At the very far end of the woods there was a huge mountain. "How do you fancy going to that mountain Gully" said Ben "Woof woof" barked Gully, I think that means yes thought Ben to himself. So off they went fighting there way through huge nettles, till eventully they came to a river. Which was roughly two metres deep. Ben put a stick in and held it to see how deep the water was "oh no" said Ben, so Gully swam with Ben on his back. Eventully they came to a Bears Cave luckily the bear was asleep, just then the bear woke up and chased after them "aagh!" screamed Ben, "quick run Gully" shouted ben soon they came to an electric fence. Gully dug a hole quickly and ben helped they both crawled under ad came out the other side "PHEW!" said Ben. They had reached the mountain they started to climb until they were half way. Then it was just cliff so they got the rope they took Ben took a throw and it but they never had any success so they went along the mountain. Then they never belived there eyes. they found a treasure chest. Ben had a knife in his picnic basket. So Ben burst the lock with it and opened the lid. And the chest was full of Gold, Silver, treasure and jewels.
The End

Levels - Language: C, Spelling: C, Ideas: B, Punctuation: C

Example 7: Personal

Pupils wrote a personal account describing a response to their own special place.

Getaway

My getaway place is my bedroom. I don't share a room with anyone so everything in the room belongs to me. It's quite a big room so I have a lot of space to do my own thing.
When I get into trouble I go to my room and slam the door. If Jenny knocks on my door I shout at her to get lost. The first thing I do is switch my music on load. I either lie on my bed and thing or I read a magazine. I have a lava lamp in my room, so if it's dark I switch it on. It's really relaxing and that really calms me down.
Sometimes I tidy my room. A really good tidy. I let my anger out by throwing all the rubbish I don't use or want in the bin. I like my room because it has all my own belongings in it and it's my own space. Anyone who wants to come in has to knock, and it depends on how I'm feeling if I let them in or not.
If I really don't want to stay in my room I go and lock myself in the bathroom. I spray loads of perfumes in there, but that's another story.

Levels - Language: D, Spelling: D, Ideas: D, Punctuation: D

15

Example 8: Imaginative

This is a story of an adventure which began as the pupils stepped through their own front door.

Through the Door

I opened the door and my mum and dad were sitting in the kitchen at the table. They usually are sitting in the kitchen when they want to tell me something. As I walked in they were both staring at me, they looked unhappy.
"James," my mum shouted, "can you come in the kitchen please? We have something to tell you.
"Yes, what is it?" I answered. I knew it was something bad I could tell by the look in their faces.
"We'll just come out with it straight away. We're not your real parents."
"Ha ha, very funny now can you just tell me what it is?" They didn't speak for a moment then my mum burst into tears.
"James were telling you the truth. We haven't told you before because we didn't think you were old enough to know, but now you are and now you know.
"I can't believe it how can it be?" James said nearly crying and run up to his room. Ever since he has never been the same. Anytime it is brought up he just ignores it as if he didn't hear it.

Levels - Language: D, Spelling: D, Ideas: D, Punctuation: D

Example 9: Functional

Pupils wrote a letter informing parents of the details of a school trip.

The Expedition

Dear Parent

From the 8th-12th June 1998, Primary 7/3 will have the opportunity to go on a field trip to the Isle of Hirsay in the Hebrides.

There will be a coach which will leave from the school, promptly, at 8a.m. on the Monday morning. They shall then be driven t the Isle of Lochalsh where they will transfer onto a ferry which will take them out to the island.

Accommodation for the children will be provided by the Hirsay Outdoor Centre. We have been staying there for the past four years and the facilities have been of an extremely high standard. Children shall choose partners who they will share a room with.

During the day they will be doing a wide variety of educational and physical activities. They will be constantly identifying different types of plant and animal life, looking and discussing the landscape and they will also be visiting the remains of an old Viking site. There will be a good choice of physical activities including sailing ad rock-climbing.

For the trip children will need:

pullover or jumper	towel
T-shirt	wash kit
trousers or jeans	trainers
school tracksuit	underwear
waterproof jacket	2 pairs of socks

example continued on next page...

The children will arrive back at about 7pm on the Friday. A ringround has been issued and should there be any dramatic change to our schedule it will be put into operation.

The cost of the trip is £110. Cheques should be made payable to the school. If you have any queries do not hesitate to ask me.

Yours sincerely, Name supplied

Levels - Language: E, Spelling: E, Ideas: E, Punctuation: E

Example 10: Personal

Pupils wrote a personal account about what bravery meant to them.

Bravery

I have never shown any true acts of bravery, such as saving a life etc. I've never even broken a bone to be brave about. Although, there have been a few times where I needed to be braver than usual, and when members of my family have. For instance, I had to be brave when I moved up to secondary school. I didn't want to leave the security of primary. I had to make new friends and get used to the new school and school routines. Another instance is when recently I had to have an operation to have 4 teeth out. I wasn't too scared, but I still had to be brave and be prepared for the anaestetic and my brace to follow. When I was smaller I had to be brave when I needed butterfly stitches in my head, because I'd fallen over. Getting them on was quite sore, especially when they were ripped off again! Getting vaccinations at school was also scary and had cause for bravery: especially infront of your friends.

Life is really all about bravery, every second some one has to be brave and strong and everyday you're putting yourself at risk. Writing a personal account on bravery is quite hard for me because there haven't been any special, long incidents. I can only tell you of little experiences that I've had. Bravery is a like a powerful force, it grips us and makes us fearless. It is like an emotion that prompts our actions in dangerous situations. I can think of many examples of bravery and heroism that I've seen on TV. People saving other's lives and being brave in terrifying situations. Having bravery is definitely a good thing and even the quietest and shyest of people show great acts of bravery at at least one point in their lives.

People very day, as I said, show acts of bravery, doctors, paramedics, patients, firemen/women, police officers and many more, mainly as part of their everyday life. They are in frightening and even life-threatening positions all the time and they obtain the expertise to deal with it.

When I'm in a frightening situation, a wave seems to run through me and I sort of panic inside. Everything becomes dream-like and I feel strange, but somehow I manage to keep my wits about me. My body kind of acts without me doing anything. My advice to any one who is ever in such a predicament is to focus and take time to take everything in. Take your time and take long, deep breaths.

Levels - Language: E, Spelling: E, Ideas: E, Punctuation: E

Some examples for discussion

1. Pupils wrote a magazine article about finding an alligator near the school.

Wildlife Magazine
AN ALLIGATOR LOST

The first sigt was in a fild and walking up to the Exit. The second sight was when it was just comming in to the school at midnight. The colour was a very mukey green. It was very rough and skaily. The length was amasing. The next day we saw it the janter had a plan so he do it. The plan was that he he bought a frosen chiken he opened the schools shed he put the chiken in the shed and left it open. the janter quiley shut the shed door and Mrs Magon phone the RSPCA. It took about an hour.
They told every one to stay way back and they got the alligator no bother. All thankst to the janter.

2. Having read part of a story about two runaway slave girls, pupils continued their adventures.

That Night

Julilly and Lisa set of that night. Trying to find the Railroad track. But they don't and get lost all Night they are trying to find the tracks but Fail. They are walking along a country road when a cart comes. The girls try to hide but the people find them. They girls where very scared they thaught that the man and woman where going to take them back to america. But the man and woman where very polite and say to the girls you two look very cold and hungary. Where are you going Julilly replys we are trying to find canada. The woman said thats where we are going. We live there would you like a lift. We just have enough room the girls are very happy and agree to go but Lisa was doubtfull and did not wont to go. But she got on any way. They arrived in canada the next day. Julilly and Lisa wher still asleep but the man woke them up and said, We are here in canada girls the girls wake up and are very excited, And thank the man and woman very much. The man and woman said no proplem and she went into her pocket and gave them a couple of dollors each. Julilly and Lisa thank them again. And set of they where very happy that they where free from slavery.

3. Pupils wrote a report giving reasons why their school should receive a grant.

Let's Improve

I am writing to ask for money. We need money for:

1. The school needs more art material. Right now we are needing to borrow from other classes. If you give us some money it will improve. It'll give less hassle to other classes because we won't need to borrow things and it means that the children won't need to share.
2. We need a Girl's and a Boy's changing. Right now the Girls change in the project room and the Boys change in the classroom or cloakroom. If you give us money it'll mean that they can get changed quicker without the Boys or Girls looking.
3. It think we should have a swimming pool. It is a lot of work right now. We need to pay bus fares for the children to go to _____ for swimming lesson. If you let us build one it'll mean than they can just go quicker and you won't need to pay bus fares.
4. We need to make the dinning Hall Bigger. Right now the children can't sit beside their friends because of the dinning Hall. If you give us money it'll mean that they can sit beside their friends and it'll mean that we can bring more than 1 class to come in and have their lunch.

If you give us the money it will mean alot to us. I think we need about £5000 pounds to get all this or even more money.

4. Pupils wrote a sympathetic reply to a letter from a worried friend.

Dear Ally

Address Supplied

Dear Ally

I think I know how you feel beacuase when I was five I saw lightning and thought was scary then and when I went to bed I just thought about nice things and then I got to sleep. And there was an other thing that I did when I was scared I wached what my mum was like when there was lightning.
So I think you should just watch what your mum does and it should make you think difrent about lightning. And it isnt very often children get killed by lightning. There are lots of other things you should be woried about never mind lightning. I had another feir it was drowning in the swiming pool I had the same feir till I was 7. I watched other boys that were younger than me and they were swiming without arm bands and was just waking about in the shalow end. I was fedup of waching evry one else swiming about so I went to swiming lessons and I felt a lot beter about it. Mabey If you know more about lightning it will make you feel beter.
You can ask you mum where lightning most ocurs. I think it most hits trees. Lightning usauly strikes in the midle of the sumer if it has been hot the last couple of days there might be some lighning but that dosent hapen very oftin here.But when you here how much distruction it causes it gives you the shivers but its nothing to worry about

from (name supplied)

5. Pupils wrote a letter informing parents of the details of a school trip.

The Expedition

Dear Parent,

In three weeks time as you will already know we will be going to Kilbowie in Hisay island this trip will take place on the 8th of June 98 we will leave the school at 10.00 a.m. we will travel to Oban by coach then the last part of the journy we will travel by the ferry to Hisay island.

We will be staying 'Kilbowie there will be a boys dormitory and a girls dormitory. The stay is for one week.

We will be doing many activities such as absailing, hill walking, sking, orintering, powerboating and many more.

The itims we will need are clothes, toiletries, night clothes, trainers, boots, six heavy and warm jumpers, extra socks etc.

If your child has any illnesses that they suffer from or any medicatiton your child takes please let us know as soon as possible and we will send a medication form out to you. If there is any important questions or any questions at all don't stumble to ask all our staff are very friendly.

Yours faithfully
Name supplied

6. Pupils wrote a personal account describing a response to their own special place.

Getaway

It may have been described as an "elongated, architectural disaster" by a football journalist, but to me it is very special. Kirkcaldy is the place where I go when I want to get away from life. I just wander the streets, another face in the crowd and am taken along by it all. Nobody is there to shout at me, demand that I tidy my room or ground me when I'm not home by ten-thirty. Nobody cares and in a way it is nice, being free and in control.

Literally, there is nothing special about the rows of small houses, out-of-place supermarkets and cheap shops. Like Edinburgh, it has it's good areas and bad areas although, on a whole, Edinburgh is more modern and classy. But I'm not looking for materialistic qualities like nice gardens and level pavements, that's not the reason I go there. I go there because it is the one place where I can walk down the street in a Raith Rovers jacket and nobody bats an eye-lid. No-body sniggers "relegation" or "First division" as I walk past. This helps to take the strain out of being the odd one out. A wise person once said that it's good to be different. They obviously weren't the only person in their school to support a first division football team.

Being in Kirkcaldy makes me feel sane. Convinces me that I'm not alone, because when I'm there I am surrounded by people just like me and I don't stand out at all. I suppose that it's a need to fade into the crowd and belong which forces me to go there. Once there, I feel calm and at ease. Stresses of everyday life can't touch me when I see refuge in the never-ending streets.

I should've been born there. I feel a special connection drawing me to it. I always enjoyed the visits to Kirkcaldy when I was younger in an almost magical sense. A home away from home is how it felt and that's why it is important to me. There are other reasons, of course, like the great footballing nights I've seen there and the great footballing nights I haven't seen there, the street parties, the bringing home of the 'Coca-cola cup', everything adds up to make Kirkcaldy more special to me than Edinburgh could ever be. I keep wondering how different a person I would be had I been born there and if it would still be quite so special to me. Perhaps not, but that doesn't alter anything.

As a get-away, Kirkcaldy is great. It is easy to get lost in if you don't know where you're going, but I don't want to use it just as a get-away. Somedays I want to start a whole new life there, others I don't. I know too many people in Edinburgh to be happy here, there's too many people all 'watching out for me', wanting to be part of my miserable existence. That's why I keep my trips to Kirkcaldy secret.

Nobody knows I go there. Nobody misses me when I go. That's because I don't really go there. It 's all in my mind. I can be in Kirkcaldy wherever I am. All it takes is a little imagination. But I will go there and stay there. One day.

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